DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 452 507 CS 014 371

AUTHOR Bercik, Janet
TITLE Promoting Balanced Instruction for New Teachers: Issues, Needs, and Strategies.
PUB DATE 2001-05-00
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association (46th, New Orleans, LA, April 29-May 4, 2001).
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Teachers; *Classroom Techniques; Elementary Secondary Education; *Instructional Effectiveness; *Preservice Teachers; *Reading Instruction; *Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS *New Teachers; Teacher Support Groups

ABSTRACT

Research indicates that new teachers need support that is ongoing, that provides them with additional strategies and ways to adjust to the curriculum that they are teaching. The things to think about as the issue of "balance" in the classroom is addressed are: How do new teachers effectively create this classroom? Who is responsible for assisting them? Why are colleges of education not doing this? This paper first considers thoughts relative to what is being done in college classrooms. According to the paper, future teachers, when talking to their advisor on a personal level, indicated the difficulty they had meeting what they knew was "good reading teaching" and meeting all the demands set down by their districts and the state-mandated testing programs. The paper discusses issues which colleges of education have in preparing teachers; issues of reading group management; and issues of strategies for the novice teacher--personalized strategies that will encompass the group. The paper concludes that it is critical that educators continue to use a solid research base, and examine and discuss what is occurring in schools around the state and across the country--these needs must be combined because preservice teachers are receiving jobs around the country. A list of new teacher concerns is appended. (NKA)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 452 507

Promoting Balanced Instruction for New Teachers: *Issues, Needs, and Strategies*

Janet Bercik, Ed.D.
Clinical Experiences & Student Teaching Coordinator
NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

J. T. Bercik

CS 013 151

BALANCE IN TEACHER EDUCATION

New teachers have serious issues to deal with along with adjusting to their schools. The research indicates that new teachers need support that is ongoing, provides them with additional strategies, and ways to adjust to the curriculum that they are teaching. How do they effectively create this classroom? Who is responsible for assisting them? Why aren't colleges of education doing this? These are the things that we should be thinking about as we address the idea of "Balance" in the classroom.

First let's discuss the thoughts relative to what we are doing in our college classrooms. As I informally surveyed my colleagues in the state of Illinois, friends in Indiana, and at various conferences I hear the same thing – "We are preparing our future teachers with what they need to teach reading. We do give them the strategies, the methods, and the research that one must have to be successful in the classroom."

I can attest to this fact that "we give them what they need" about reading and producing balance in the classroom. Evidence was my two future student presentations. Last year, at this time, I had two of my former pre service teachers present at the International Reading Association SIG of Balanced Reading on the work they were doing in their classrooms. They had completed action research projects for me during their university student experiences, and were now classroom

teachers. Were they using these strategies now? They were, and had continued to do so. When we talked on a personal level, they indicated the difficulty they had meeting what they knew was "good reading teaching" and yet meeting all the demands set down by their districts and the state mandated testing programs.

Timothy Blair noted at the IRA / SIG (2000) that "It's not as easy as one would expect." He referenced Lillian Katz and Jim Raths (1966) who state it is impossible to prepare teachers to handle all situations with expert skill. There, simply put, is not enough time and many of the competencies will only make sense when our future teachers are actually teaching the materials taught in concert.

ISSUES

Herein lies the snag for colleges of education, methods professors, and the schools. How do we prepare our students for that time? Do we go the route of alternative certification / education for our future teachers? Do we add to their already crowded plates and require professional development that is on going to be certified as new teachers?

Somewhere along the way we must begin to address these issues. This resulted in my looking at and reflecting on the work I have done and do with new teachers (see Appendix One). I have worked, over the past ten years at the university, and thirteen years in various schools and districts. Several issues have consistently arisen. They involve some of the following:

HOW DO I MANAGE MY READING GROUPS?

SHOULD I HAVE READING GROUPS?

HOW CAN I HELP MY STUDENTS BECOME SUCCESSFUL, SINCE THAT IS HOW I AM JUDGED?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT AND HOW MUCH TO TEACH? There is simply too much in the TEACHER'S EDITION! DO I DO IT ALL?

WHAT AND HOW DO I ADDRESS THE SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS? THE LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS?

Added to the above I found novices stating:

How can I teach what I know should be taught when I can't even get them to listen to me?

I teach at the high school and it's different. I need to teach the content!

Students are grouped and have many issues, of which learning is a major problem. How do we diagnose these issues? What if I am wrong?

STRATEGIES

I began to analyze these questions by reflecting on what I did and am doing to help these novices get through their year to become effective teachers. Each novice requires a personalized strategy that will yet encompass the group. If we need to address one person's needs then we discuss how they, the group, may handle a situation or would suggest how to handle it based on their own classrooms.

With the event of E-mail, I have immediate access to the novice, and vice-versa. I want them to be able to navigate the road to literacy in an effective and

positive manner. I want to limit their frustrations, enhance their teaching skills and strategies, and yet enhance their effectiveness as teachers.

Some strategies I have employed are:

- Enlisting colleagues and trained mentors to attend the New Teacher meetings to provide input and insight.
- Find a literature book at varying grade levels and use them as stepping stones within our seminars.
- Bring their reading / content area texts and look at the teacher's editions to elicit what and how they would choose materials from these extensive suggestions.
- Allow the new teachers time to brainstorm ideas together. They share what they are using, how they use it, and offer constructive suggestions.
- Remind them that organization of time, pacing, and looking at materials in an integrated fashion will assist them in their future successes. (This takes time and is ongoing.)

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to state that there is no one answer due to the *nature of the beast called "education!"* We have no simple answers, but we must assure our students that with assistance, reflection, and experience the process for

balance in their instruction will occur. We must continually upgrade, not only their skills, but our own!

As teachers of reading, we must be ready to assist, listen, and continue to provide the broad base of knowledge our future and present teachers need. It is critical that we continue to use a solid research base, examine and discuss what is occurring in schools around the state and across the country. We must combine these needs because our students are receiving jobs around the country. Like it or not, our students have to teach what districts want. You may not want to hear this statement but it is a reality.

We must, therefore, provide our students with the savvy of how to effect change once they are on a solid footing within their schools. They cannot be change agents until they know what and how the reading process evolves. The initial balance in the classroom will set the stage. The knowledge and realization must occur that reading is critical throughout the curriculum regardless of grade level. The litmus test will be the success of the students, the challenges the teacher provides, and the thinking that occurs.

I believe that Patricia Polacco in The Bee Tree (1993) said it most effectively as Grandpa talked to Mary Ellen,

There is such sweetness inside of that book too! . . . Such things

. . . adventure, knowledge, and wisdom.

But these things do not come easily.

You have to pursue them.

Just like we ran after the bees to find their tree,

so you

must also chase these things through the pages of a book!

"The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery."

Mark Van Doran

REFERENCES

Blair, Timothy R. *Assessing instructional emphases in a balanced reading program.* Keynote address @ BRI, May 2, 2000: Indianapolis, IN.

Polacco, Patricia. *The bee tree.* 1993. Philomel, $14.95 ISBN 0-399-32965-X.

Steiner, Stanley & Joy. *Navigating the road to literacy.* Pps. 19 - 24. Book Links. March 1999.

APPENDIX ONE

NEW TEACHER CONCERNS

- **Is it right that I am judged solely on how many of my students are successful?**
- **How do I help students become successful and test out of a grade or program?**
- **How do I deal with behavior issues such as talking, disrespect, attitude?**
- **I have to learn ways of not letting it "get under my skin!"**
- **How can I manage my reading groups better?**
- **Students talk without raising their hands. What are some strategies to use?**
- **As new students arrive in the classroom, how do you deal with that and yet keep up with the rest of the group? Time is such a big factor.**
- **Should one feel that a confidence given to a principal is kept?**
- **I need to be uniform with my discipline and this is frustrating.**
- **Lesson plans require precision and timing. How do I get there? Especially when limited on time in the junior / high school setting.**
- **How do I know whether or not my grading system is the right one?**
- **How does one deal with sarcasm? [Elementary and high school levels]**
- **What can you do with students who have learning disabilities? How can you assist them without having them singled out?**
- **Students are grouped and have many issues, of which learning is major, how do you diagnose this?**